



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 26 2011

Scripture Story: Genesis 34; 35; 37.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 19.

family fiascoes



Photo by Lew Campbell

flashlight

"There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. Christ Himself said, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life'" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 207).

keytext

"And God said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. . . . The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you.'"

(Genesis 35:11, 12, NIV)

what do you think?

Circle three words that best describe your family:

Busy	Loving	Stressed
Critical	Caring	Noisy
Cheap	Happy	Funny
Dysfunctional	Growing	Outgoing
Clueless	Peaceful	Close
Fractured	Christian	Disconnected
Embarrassing	Conservative	

Allowing for the possibility of a “perfect family,” finish the following statements:

“A perfect family would always _____.”

“A perfect family would never _____.”

did you know?

By the time Joseph turned 10 years old, here’s the situation in his family: The father is a polygamist, fathering 12 sons from four women (two of whom were sisters) who lived in the same household, as did all of the brothers and half brothers. His only sister had been raped. His older brothers were guilty of murder, plundering, theft, and gross immorality. His half brother Reuben had sexual relations with Bilhah, who was the mother of two of his half brothers. And Jacob, his father, did nothing about the family fiasco. Here’s a family ready to star in a TV reality show that redefines “dysfunction.”

INTO THE STORY

“Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land. When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area, saw her, he took her and violated her.”

“All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised. Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male.”

“Then God said to Jacob, ‘Go up to Bethel.’”

Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died.”

“Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. . . . So Rachel died.”

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, . . . and he made a

richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

“Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.”

“So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the richly ornamented robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern.”

“Judah said to his brothers, ‘What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.’ His brothers agreed.

“So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.”

“Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, ‘We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.’

“He recognized it and said, ‘It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.’”

(Genesis 34:1, 2, 24, 25; 35:1, 8, 16-19; 37:3-5, 23, 24, 26-28, 31-33, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

This season of Jacob's life is filled with many family traumas. *Underline* each one, then rank them in order of difficulty.

What picture of God do you get when reading these stories from Jacob's life?

Circle the phrases that suggest dysfunction in Jacob's family.

What can we learn from this season of Jacob's life with regard to the following issues? Identify a part of Jacob's story that informs our understanding of each issue listed below, then write down the principle we learn from the biblical account.

The consequences of sin:

Sanctification (growing to become like Jesus):

Uncontrolled anger:

The dangers of being aligned with the world:

Peer pressure:

Community:

Revenge:

Human nature:

If the following stories were produced as Hollywood movies, what titles would you give them?

Dinah and the Shechemites (Genesis 34)

Jacob's return to Bethel (Genesis 35:1-15)

The deaths of Rachel and Isaac (Genesis 35:16-29)

Joseph's dreams (Genesis 37:1-11)

Joseph sold into slavery (Genesis 37:12-36)

punch lines

"Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife"
(Proverbs 17:1, NIV).

"Wives, understand and support your husbands by submitting to them in ways that honor the Master. Husbands, go all out in love for your wives. Don't take advantage of them. Children, do what your parents tell you. This delights the Master no end. Parents, don't come down too hard on your children or you'll crush their spirits"
(Colossians 3:18-21, Message).

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:5-7, NIV).

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" (Proverbs 14:30, NIV).

"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth" (James 3:14, NIV).

other eyes

"Jacob is a classic illustration of a man who was too busy for his family, too preoccupied and unconcerned, which meant he was too passive to deal with what was occurring in the lives of his children."

—Charles Swindoll, current U.S. writer and clergyman.

Sabbath

Do the *What Do You Think?* activities listed in the beginning of this week's lesson and respond to the questions given. While the "perfect family" may be hard to find, sometimes knowing what is most important aids in evaluating whether a family is functional or dysfunctional. What do you think about the following passage cut from the words of the wise man?

"Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" (Proverbs 17:1, NIV).

My paraphrase:

What do you think is the central truth in this passage? How do the words of the wise man relate to your family?

Sunday

Read the snapshots of Jacob's family traumas in the *Into the Story* section. As you read each passage carefully, how do you feel about some of the unsavory stories (such as that of Dinah) that are included in the Bible? Why do you suppose God included such sordid tales in the Sacred Record?

Respond to the questions in the *Out of the Story* section as they guide you into a deeper understanding of the family issues of this Bible story. What do you think God is trying to say to you in the snapshots you have read?

In a relatively short time Jacob lost three close companions (Deborah, Rachel, and Isaac). What's the best thing you can do for somebody like Jacob who is grief-stricken with loss?

Monday

Read the *Key Text* for this week and reflect on why this promise is significant. One important reality to consider is that from the promise of a Savior in the Garden of Eden to the time of Jacob, people were waiting for a Savior to come from within their family line—family dynamics are extremely crucial! It must have been frustrating for Jacob to watch the way mistake after mistake marred the family peace and to still believe that God could truly fulfill His promise. But God had made a clear and simple promise (Genesis 35:11, 12). Compare this promise with Philippians 1:6. How can God fulfill this promise in your life?

Tuesday

Ellen White reveals a masterful insight on the power of choice in the *Flashlight* quote. Examine this statement and think about two people you know: one who may be resisting the promptings of God's Spirit in their life; another who is aligning their life in harmony with God's plan for their salvation. Both have a choice to make. Pray for them, as well as yourself to deepen your commitment to God's work in your lives.

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* and choose the verse that seems to speak to the scenario in which you live today. Of all the passages offered in this section, which do you think would make the biggest difference in families today if taken to heart and applied? Why? Share this scripture with your parents or others you know who might need a helpful word from God in their daily struggles. Be sure to let them know you are praying for them.

Thursday

Read chapter 19 in *Patriarchs and Prophets* and try to glean from this reading three insights that open your eyes to as-

pects of Jacob's life that are like your own. Write them in the space below:

Like Jacob/Like Me

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What lesson in this chapter do you think would benefit families and believers in any generation?

Friday

Paul offers a prayer for believers, saying, "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:5-7, NIV). As you look at the way you relate to your family members, do you see a message God might have for you in the above text?

Go out of your way this week to be a peacemaker, and God will go with you and bless you!

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 19.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.